

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:

CLAIM 1. A method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, comprising:

- (a) storing at an Internet web site at least a partial list of stores of a chain of stores, and their postal addresses, where each store of the at least a partial list of stores services customers in a specific geographical area;
- (b) storing at said Internet web site a postal-service listing of customers potentially serviced by said at least a partial list of stores;
- (c) creating the potentiality of establishing a point-to-point connection between the computer associated with said Internet web site with the associated computer of each of said at least a partial list of stores;
- (d) receiving a request to order at said Internet web site from a customer;
- (e) determining at said web site which store of said at least a partial list of stores services the customer of said step (d)
- (f) receiving the order from the customer of said step

- (d);
- (g) downloading the order received in said step (f) to the selected store from said step (e);
- (h) said step (g) comprising downloading the order directly into the computer system of the selected store, thereby bypassing the order-taking process of the selected store.

CLAIM 2. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, further comprising:

- (i) uploading from the computer of the selected store of said step (e) the menu of that selected store; said step (i) being performed after said step (e).

CLAIM 3. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, wherein said step (a) comprises storing said at least a partial list of stores by postal-service zip code.

CLAIM 4. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to

claim 1, wherein said step (b) comprises storing said customer listing by street address.

CLAIM 5. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 4, wherein said step (a) comprises storing the service-map of each store of said at least a partial list of stores, which service-map lists the boundaries of service of each said store by street address; said step (e) comprising matching the street address of the customer of said step (d) with the street address of a selected one of said at least a partial list of stores.

CLAIM 6. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 5, wherein said step (e) comprises comparing the street address of the customer of said step (d) with the street addresses of a plurality of chosen stores of said at least a partial list of stores in order to determine which selected one of the plurality of chosen stores specifically services the customer address of said step (d).

CLAIM 7. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, wherein said step (c) comprises using at least one of: The Internet, and direct modem-to-modem connection over the PSTN.

CLAIM 8. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, wherein said step (g) comprises attempting to download the order first via one of the: Internet, and downloading the order through a direct modem-to-modem connection via the PSTN to the selected store's computer.

CLAIM 9. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 2, wherein each of said steps (g) and (i) comprises downloading via at least one of the: The Internet, and direct modem-to-modem connection via the PSTN.

CLAIM 10. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, further comprising:

(i) after said step (h), uploading from the computer of the selected store from said (e) to the computer of the Internet web site the estimated time of delivery of the downloaded order of said step (h); and

(j) e-mailing the customer of said step (d) the estimated time of delivery.

CLAIM 11. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, further comprising:

(i) e-mailing the customer of said step (d) a message that the selected store of said step (e) cannot fill the order via computer-to-computer connection.

CLAIM 12. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, further comprising, before said step (e):

(j) uploading from at least one of the stores of said chain of stores the street-address servicing area serviced by said at least one store of said chain of stores; and

(k) storing the street-address servicing area at said

Internet web site.

CLAIM 13. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 12, wherein said step of uploading from at least one of the stores of said chain of stores the street-address servicing area serviced by each said at least one store of said chain of stores comprises uploading all of the servicing area maps of all of the stores of said chain of stores; and said step of storing the street-address servicing area at said Internet web comprises storing all of the uploaded servicing area maps of all of the stores of the chain of stores, whereby said step (e) may be performed.

CLAIM 14. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, wherein the order of said step (f) is for at least one pizza, said step (f) comprising:

said customer selecting at least the size of the pizza and the toppings therefor.

CLAIM 15. The method of receiving and placing an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 1, wherein said step (e) comprises: Normalizing the address entered by the customer using address-normalization software, so that the address is normalized to a certified postal-service address-list.

CLAIM 16. A method of sending an order received on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, comprising:

- (a) storing at an Internet web site at least a partial list of stores of a chain of stores with their locations, where each store of the at least a partial list of stores services customers in a specific geographical area;
- (b) storing at said Internet web site a postal-service listing of customers potentially serviced by said at least a partial list of stores;
- (c) creating the potentiality of establishing a point-to-point connection between the computer associated with said Internet web site with the associated computer of each of said at least a partial list of stores;
- (d) determining at said web site which store of said at

least a partial list of stores services a customer
placing an order;

(e) downloading a customer order to the selected store
from said step (d);

(f) said step (g) comprising downloading the order
directly into the computer system of the selected store,
thereby bypassing the order-taking process of the
selected store.

CLAIM 17. The method of sending an order received on the
Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to
claim 14, further comprising:

(g) uploading from the computer of the selected store of
said step (d) the menu of that selected store;

said step (a) comprising storing a list of stores of a
chain of pizza stores;

said step (e) comprising downloading the size of the
pizza ordered, the toppings therefor, and ancillary order-
items.

CLAIM 18. The method of sending an order received on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, wherein said step (a) comprising storing a list of stores of a chain of restaurants.

CLAIM 19. The method of sending an order received on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, wherein said step (b) comprises storing said customer listing by street address.

CLAIM 20 The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 19, wherein said step (a) comprises storing the service-map of each store of said at least a partial list of stores, which service-map lists the boundaries of service of each said store by street address; said step (d) comprising matching the street address of the customer with the street address of a selected one of said at least a partial list of stores.

CLAIM 21. The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 19, wherein said step (d) comprises comparing the street address of the customer with the street addresses of a plurality of chosen stores of said at least a partial list of stores in order to determine which selected one of the plurality of chosen stores specifically services the customer address.

CLAIM 22. The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, wherein said step (c) comprises using at least one of: The Internet, and direct modem-to-modem connection over the PSTN.

CLAIM 23. The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, further comprising after said step (e), if said step (e) fails:

- (h) placing an automated computer generated, voice-order to said selected store for inputting the order through the normal, human-operator controlled order-taking service.

CLAIM 24. The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, further comprising:

(f) e-mailing the customer a message that the selected store cannot fill the order via computer-to-computer connection.

CLAIM 25. The method of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 16, wherein said step (d) comprises: Normalizing the address entered by the customer using address-normalization software, so that the address is normalized to a certified postal-service address-list.

CLAIM 26. A system for sending an order received on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, comprising:

a web-site on the Internet, said web site having a dedicated computer means and memory means operatively associated with said computer means, said memory means comprising;

a first section storing at least a partial list of stores of a chain of stores by postal address, where each

store of the at least a partial list of stores services customers in a specific geographical area;

a second section storing a postal-service listing of customers potentially serviced by said at least a partial list of stores;

a third section storing applications software for creating the potentiality of establishing a point-to-point connection between the computer associated with said Internet web site with the associated computer of each of said at least a partial list of stores;

a fourth section storing applications software for determining at said web site which store of said at least a partial list of stores services a customer placing an order; and

a fifth section storing applications software for downloading a customer order directly into the computer system of the selected store, thereby bypassing the order-taking process of the selected store.

CLAIM 27. The system for sending an order received on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 26, wherein said second section of said memory means

comprises means for storing said customer listing by street address.

CLAIM 28. The system of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 26, wherein said first section comprises means for storing the service-map of each store of said at least a partial list of stores, which service-map lists the boundaries of service of each said store by street address; and said fourth section comprising means for matching the street address of the customer with the street address of a selected one of said at least a partial list of stores.

CLAIM 29. The system of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 27, wherein said fourth section comprises software application means for comparing the street address of the customer with the street addresses of a plurality of chosen stores of said at least a partial list of stores in order to determine which selected one of the plurality of chosen stores specifically services the customer address.

CLAIM 30. The system of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 26, wherein said fifth section comprises means for establishing communication with the computer of the selected one of the chain of stores by at least one of: The Internet, and direct modem-to-modem connection over the PSTN.

CLAIM 31. The system of sending an order on the Internet to a selected store of a chain of stores, according to claim 26, wherein said memory means further comprises a sixth section storing normalizing software for normalizing the address entered by the customer, so that the address is normalized to a certified postal-service address-list.